

INDIVIDUAL HISTORY

HEINKEL He111 H-20/R1 701152/8471M

MUSEUM ACCESSION NUMBER 78/A/1033

- 1944 Built and delivered to the Luftwaffe. Built as a H-20 variant to carry 16 paratroops and 3 crew. The seats and straps for the 16 paratroops in two compartments remain on the aircraft today. Fitted with an electrically operated EDL 131 dorsal turret and 1,750hp Junkers Jumo 213 E-1 engines.
- 1944/5 Luftwaffe use unclear. With the German surrender in May 1945 this aircraft was initially allotted to USAAF Colonel H E Watson's collection of German aircraft, and was flown to Cherbourg on the French coast for shipment to the USA for evaluation. Shipment did not occur due to the lack of space on the allocated vessel, HMS Reaper, which sailed for Newark, New Jersey on 20 Jul 45 carrying 38 of the 50 German a/c originally selected ('Watson's Whizzers', 'Air Force' magazine April 1981 p 54-62).
- 02 Jul 45 Ferried from Cherbourg to Boxted, Essex, home of the 56th Fighter Group, USAAF, who flew P47M Thunderbolts. Flown by 56th FG crew the 56th had been aiding Colonel Watson in his collecting so it is appropriate that they acquired this surplus aircraft. See R A Freeman's' Article 'My Heinkel' Air Pictorial Dec 85 p.465.
- 07 Jul 45 Noted at Boxted by Mr Roger A Freeman (see his letters, 12 Apr 76 and 13 Jan 77 in DoRIS Ref.B2705). Finished at this time in dark olive upper surfaces and black undersides. Radio call letters on fuselage sides roughly painted out, but black code NT visible forward of the cross with a yellow H on the rear fuselage and the werke number 701152 on the tail. The cross and swastikas were crudely painted out and crude US markings painted over them. Colour photo in this state; 8th AF News Volume 03 Number 03 December 2003 p.29. The original factory code NT + SL was, and still is, carried on a plate over the radio operators' position.
- 28 Jul 45 Noted by Mr Freeman (see above references) freshly painted in the same colour scheme as that of the Thunderbolts of the 61st Fighter Squadron of the 56th Fighter Group - matt purple - black overall, with red (the group making) rudder, spinners and forward part of the engine cowlings. This red paint was still visible below later black overpainting in 1977 at St Athan - see file letter 31 Jan 77 in DoRIS Ref.B2705. In addition to code letters of the 61st Fighter Group, 'HV' were painted in red, outlined in white, on the fuselage side. On the other side of the fuselage cross was a monogram, again in red outlined in white - forming the individual identification letter.

This consisted of a letter O in which was a letter C and centred in that the letter W - the initials of the three man American crew - Major J Carter, 61st FS, Major Williamson 62nd FS and Captain J Ordway, engineering officer, 61st FS who flew the aircraft on numerous occasions. Ground crew chief was Tech Sgt Barney H Hunter who also acted as flight engineer and co-pilot. Photos: Air Pictorial Dec 85 p.465; Flypast October 2006 p.60.

Mr Freeman also noted 2 racks under the wings - the H-20 could carry two 1,764 pound supply containers.

- 01 Aug 45 Displayed at Open Day events at several US bases.
- 12 Sep 45 Due to the impending return of 56th FG personnel to the USA the Heinkel was flown by Major Carter to RAF North Weald, part of a ploy to avoid its scrapping see Freeman's' Air Pictorial Article.
- 14 Oct 45 Moved to Heston airfield by this date, still in US markings.
- 03 Nov 45 Flown by Gp Capt Cunningham from Heston to Farnborough for inclusion in the German Aircraft Display in the RAE display. The aircraft's last flight. By now carried RAF roundels over the USAAF Star and Bar but retained a small swastika on the fin. Photos: War Prizes (027726) p.56; War Prizes The Album p.37; Scale Models Sep 71 p.477; Aeromodeller Jan 46 p.129; Aeromilitaria 4/97 p.102.
- 10 May 46 Initial allocation to Air Historical Branch ex Farnborough.
- 15 Dec 46 Noted in scrap area at Farnborough.
- May 47 Formally selected for Museum use by Air Historical Branch.
- 19 May 47 Packed for storage at RAF Sealand.
- c.late 47-48 With pressure on space at Sealand moved to German Air Force Equipment Centre at RAF Stanmore Park, Middlesex.
- Sep 54 By now painted black all over, with white crosses, displayed on Horseguards Parade for Battle of Britain week together with several other AHB aircraft. Turret still fitted at this stage. Photos: Aerodata International 12, 011645; Air Enthusiast Winter 1994 p.29; Flypast October 2006 p.60; Air Pictorial Nov 54 p.339; Flight 17 Sep 54 p.434 and Aeroplane 1 Oct 54 p.508, the latter describing the Heinkel as 'in worse condition than the others' (on display).
- 12 Sep 55 Again displayed on Horseguards Parade, still complete with turret. Photo: War Prizes p.150; Flight 23 Sep 1955 p.537.
- Late 1955 To No.15 MU RAF Wroughton, Wilts for storage with other AHB aircraft.
- c. Mid 1958 To RAF Fulbeck, Lincs for further storage with the AHB collection, still in its overall black paint scheme (Central Column May 1968 p.8).

- 1960 With dispersal of the Fulbeck collection the Heinkel moved to RAF Biggin Hill, Kent. Photos at Biggin Hill - Sale Models Sep 71 p.480-481; Aero Modeller Jan 66 p.25; Flight 15 July 1960 p.78; Aeroplane June 2002 p.61; RAFM PC73/59/124.
- c. May 1967 To RAF Henlow, Beds for possible use in 'Battle of Britain Film' ground shots. Apparently use for cockpit shots, and some of the cockpit instruments may have been removed by the film company to equip a fibreglass mock-up. The EDL 131 dorsal turret, now missing, may have been removed at this time to give a 1940 appearance.
- Colour photo on display at Henlow; Air Enthusiast Jul/Aug 1998 p.64.
- Sep 69 To RAF St Athan, Glamorgan. Allotted maintenance serial 8471M. Still in overall black paint scheme, with a cockpit devoid of instruments. Photo: Air Extra 13 p.30; the Captive Luftwaffe (009336) p.48 and 'Heinkel 111' (012303) - colour photo, Sep 72. Some restoration work carried out.
- 13 Feb 76 Allotted RAF Maintenance Serial 8471M.
- May 78 To new Battle of Britain Museum, Hendon, opened 28 Nov 78 where it remains displayed today. Photos: Heinkel 111 (012303) -displayed in original factory colour scheme as built. Further photos; Air Pictorial Dec 85 p.466; Air World International May 95. Repainted at No.5 MU Kemble prior to installation at Hendon. Given 1944 factory colours.
- 1992-1999 Ongoing restoration work by members of the RAF Museum Friends - cockpit refurbished, panels cleaned and repainted, controls reconnected and replacement radio mast fitted, and anti-corrosion treatment applied. Photos as of 2005; Wingspan International No.27 pp.34 -38; as of 2006; Flypast August 2006 pp.22-23 and 26.

Survivors

In addition to a dozen 1950s built Spanish Casa 2-111 aircraft, five other original German built He111 aircraft survive:

He111 E-1 25-82 Museo Del Aire, Cuatro Vientos, Madrid

He 111H-1 Wnr2527 6N+NH Recovered virtually intact Sep 04 from a Fjord near Trondheim; for Deutsche Technikmuseum, Berlin.

(HE111H-6 Allegedly ex Spain 2001; reportedly now in USA)

He111 P-1 WNr 1526 Norwegian Air Force Museum, Bodo

He111P-2 WNr 5883. Composite restoration using fuselage of CASA 2.111B B.21-20. Southern Austria.

TEXT - ANDREW SIMPSON © ROYAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM 2007.